

Remarks

The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks. Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-16 and 24-77 are pending.

Restriction Requirement and Response

In the Office action, the Examiner splits claims 1-70 into six groups as follows.

Group I – claims 1-16 and 70.

Group II – claims 17-29.

Group III – claims 30-37.

Group IV – claims 38-43.

Group V – claims 44-47.

Group VI – claims 48-69.

In explaining the rationale for the restriction requirement, the Examiner applies the rules for PCT applications, not the rules for U.S. applications. The Applicants respectfully disagree with the reasoning stated in the restriction requirement.

Claims 1-16 and 70 (Examiner's Group I) and claims 48-69 (Examiner's Group VI) should be examined as a single group. Claims 1-16 and 70 are generally directed to encoder-side processing; claims 48-69 include claims generally directed to corresponding decoder-side processing. For example, "encoder-side" claim 4 recites joint coding of: (a) a "switch code" that "indicates whether a set of pixels is intra-coded"; (b) "motion vector information"; and (c) a "terminal symbol indicating whether subsequent data is encoded for the set of pixels." By way of comparison, "decoder-side" claim 48 recites receiving a code that reflects joint encoding of: (a) "information indicating whether the set of pixels is intra-coded or inter-coded;" (b) "motion information;" and (c) "a terminal symbol."

If the Examiner maintains the 6-way restriction requirement as set forth in the Office action, the Applicants elect the claims of the Examiner's group VI (claims 48-69) with traverse. The Applicants have pointed out the overlap between the Examiner's groups I and VI. Examining claims 1-16 and 70 together with claims 48-69 should not require an additional search, nor should the encoder-side claims and corresponding decoder-side claims pending in this case have a separate classification or status in the art. *See M.P.E.P. § 808.02.*

Proposed Groupings of Claims

The Applicants propose the following alternative grouping of claims.

Combined Group (Examiner's Groups I and VI) – claims 1-16 and 48-70.

Examiner's Group II – claims 17-29.

Examiner's Group III – claims 30-37.

Examiner's Group IV – claims 38-43.

Examiner's Group V – claims 44-47.

If the Examiner agrees that claims 1-16 and 48-70 should be examined as a single group, the Applicants elect the claims of this combined group (claims 1-16 and 48-70) without traverse.

New Claims 71-73

Claims 71-77 are method claims based directly on computer-readable medium claims 48-54, respectively. Claims 71-77 should be examined in the same group as claims 48-54.

Claims 17-23 have been canceled without prejudice.

If any issues remain, the Examiner is formally requested to contact the undersigned attorney prior to issuance of the next Office Action in order to arrange a telephonic interview. It is believed that a brief discussion of the merits of the present application may expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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